

June 13, 2003

TO: Internal File

FROM: Wayne H. Western, Environmental Scientist III

RE: Discontinue Subsidence Monitoring, Plateau Mining Corporation, Willow Creek Mine, C/007/038-AM03B

**SUMMARY:**

On April 28, 2003, the Division received an amendment (AM03B) from the Permittee at the Willow Creek Mine to discontinue subsidence monitoring. The Permittee wants to discontinue subsidence monitoring because mining operations have ceased. All mining with the exception of development work was done by longwall methods.

On January 22, 2003, the Division approved an amendment requesting a reduction in water monitoring based on there had been no change in water quality since mining operations ceased. One of the main reasons the Division monitors subsidence is to determine potential impacts to water resource.

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TECHNICAL MEMO

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**TECHNICAL ANALYSIS:**

**OPERATION PLAN**

**SUBSIDENCE CONTROL PLAN**

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR 784.20, 817.121, 817.122; R645-301-521, -301-525, -301-724.

**Analysis:**

**Subsidence Control Plan**

On April 28, 2003, the Division received amendment AM03B, to discontinue subsidence monitoring. The Permittee requested that subsidence monitoring no longer be required based on:

- Due to unfortunate events only a small area was subsided.
- The surface has stabilized and due to the nature of longwall mining, additional subsidence is unlikely. Subsidence reports were included in the amendment.
- Water quality remains stable.

The Division reviewed the subsidence monitoring reports from when mining began until 1997 and until the last subsidence monitoring report in 2002.

With the exception of one monitoring station, all measurements were less than 1.0 foot. The small amount of subsidence is due to the limited amount of mining before the mine was closed. Drawing 1 shows that limited mining occurred in two longwall sections.

Usually the Division notices that 90% of the amount of subsidence will occur within nine months of mining. After four years of no mining, the subsidence points appear to have stabilized. Since the ground surface is stabilized, this suggests that subsidence has ceased.

The Division reviewed the information in the amendment and found that continued subsidence monitoring is not needed because:

- Most of the planned subsidence has already occurred.
- Any additional subsidence should be small.
- The site is stable and additional monitoring is not expected to be beneficial.

The Permittee did include a statement that to be inserted into the MRP stating that subsidence monitoring would cease.

**Findings:**

The information in amendment AM03B is considered adequate to meet the minimum requirements of the subsidence section of the regulations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Division should approve the amendment.